

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 29, 2020

The Honorable Ralph DLG. Torres  
Governor  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
Caller Box 10007  
Saipan, MP 96950

The Honorable Victor B. Hocog  
President of the Senate  
Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

The Honorable Blas Jonathan Tenorio Attao  
Speaker of the House  
Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature  
Saipan, MP 96950

Gentlemen,

Officials of the Environmental Protection Agency will be meeting in the Northern Marianas with Commonwealth officials next week, I understand. A focus of this visit will be a plan for expenditure of the \$56 million for solid waste management that I was able to earmark for the Marianas last year in Public Law 116-20, the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019. EPA may also discuss an additional \$10.4 million I was able to set aside in the Disaster Relief Act for drinking water facilities and waste water treatment plants impacted by Typhoon Yutu.

With respect to the \$56 million for solid waste I write to encourage you to use these funds not only to cover the costs of managing waste generated by Yutu, but also to address the long-standing needs of Rota and Tinian for sanitary waste facilities that meet modern environmental standards. I can assure you the language of the Relief Act, specifying the \$56 million is to be used for "necessary expenses related to the consequences of Typhoon Yutu for the hazardous waste financial assistance grants program and for other solid waste management activities" [emphasis added] and kept "available until expended," was intended to give the Commonwealth both the flexibility and the time to accomplish this larger purpose beyond the immediate need for typhoon debris disposal.

We all know that the open dump site and lack of a sanitary waste facility on Tinian has proven a barrier to proposed economic development, and is, as well, a health and safety hazard for residents. And we know that the increased construction activity by the military on Tinian and population increase that will accompany that construction will only add to the volume of waste

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The Honorable Ralph DLG. Torres  
The Honorable Blas Jonathan Tenorio Attao  
The Honorable Victor B. Hocog  
January 3, 2020  
Page 2

materials that must be properly managed. A lack of funding has made it impossible to fix this problem in the past. Now, sufficient money is available.

The people of Rota, too, live without benefit of a modern, environmentally sound solid waste facility. This is a blemish on our good stewardship, given the otherwise pristine condition of much of this beautiful island that is home to numerous rare and endangered species of plant and animal life. Looking ahead to this year's completion of the National Park Service resource study of the suitability and feasibility of designating areas of Rota as a national park, which I included in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, I think it becomes even more important to demonstrate our care for Rota's natural environment. And the \$56 million in the Disaster Relief Act allows us to do so.

There should be enough funding to care for the Marpi Solid Waste Facility, too. This facility, which was an example of best practice for the whole island Pacific region, when first opened, is certainly stressed by the volume of waste created by multiple typhoons in recent years and development activities. What was once a project of which the Commonwealth and the Environmental Protection Agency could be proud is clearly not operating as it should, as evidenced by this week's Marianas Variety report: House calls for 'urgent' meeting with DPW over Marpi landfill. Again, the \$56 million I included in Public Law 116-20 is available to help pull the Marpi facility back on track.

Thank you for your consideration of these ideas. As with any federal funding I bring to the Marianas, I have to place my trust in Commonwealth officials and in those you will be meeting with from the Environmental Protection Agency to use these resources wisely and to the greatest benefit. At the same time, I feel a responsibility to make sure that you and everyone who will be involved in putting this money to work is fully aware of the opportunity to make far-reaching and long-lasting improvements to our solid waste management that these disaster relief funds now give us.

Please, let me know how I can be of further assistance to you.

Sincerely,



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN  
Member of Congress

cc: Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios  
Members, Marianas Commonwealth Legislature